

# Romantic Planning Framework

## 1. Identifying “heroic” qualities

***What heroic human qualities are central to the topic? What emotional images do they evoke? What within the topic can best evoke wonder?***

In order to help students connect emotionally to the material, teachers need to first identify their own emotional attachment to it. What heroic human quality or emotion—courage, compassion, tenacity, fear, hope, loathing, delight, etc.—can we identify in the topic? These human qualities help us—and our students—see the world in human terms and give human meaning to events and ideas in all disciplines. We “humanize” each topic not to falsify it confuse but to infuse the world with human meaning. Again, this first task is the most difficult part of planning the lesson or unit. We are asked to feel about the topic as well as to think about it; indeed, we are asked to “perfink” (David Kresch’s term for perceiving, feeling, and thinking together) about it.

**Identifying heroic qualities:**

- 1. Main heroic quality :**
- 2. Alternative(s):**

**Images that capture the heroic quality:**

## 2. Organizing the topic into a narrative structure

### 2.1. Initial access

***What aspect of the topic best embodies the heroic qualities identified as central to the topic? Does this expose some extreme of experience or limit of reality? What image can help capture this aspect?***

For the first lesson of a unit or the opening part of a single lesson, teachers are asked to search their own imagination for images that catch the heroic quality

that will provide the dramatic structure for the unit. Remember, it is as important to feel the heroic qualities as well as think about them.

**Exotic/extreme content that best embodies the heroic quality:**

## **2.2. Composing the body of the lesson or unit**

***How do we organize the material into a narrative structure to best illustrate the heroic qualities? Sketch the story, ensuring that the qualities will be made clear by the narrative.***

The principal heroic quality should provide the drama and conflict in the story. Remember, the heroic qualities should be those that most effectively convey the content of the topic.

**Sketch the overall structure of the lesson/unit:**

## **2.3. Humanizing the content**

***What aspects of the narrative best illustrate the human emotions in it and evoke a sense of wonder? What ideals and/or challenges to tradition or convention are evident in the content?***

Think of how a good movie or novel makes aspects of the world engaging. Obstacles to the hero are humanized in one form or another, almost given motives; they are seen in human terms. To do this, we don't need to falsify anything, but rather we highlight a particular way of seeing it—because this is precisely the way students' imaginations are engaged by knowledge.

**What content can be best shown in terms of hopes, fears, intentions or other emotions?**

## **2.4. Pursuing details**

***What parts of the topic can students best explore in exhaustive detail?***

While it is easy to give students a project to carry out, it is a little harder to think about what aspect of the topic they might be able to exhaust, i.e. be able to find out nearly everything that is known about it. But there are such parts in every topic, and the security and sense of mastery that comes from knowing nearly as much as anyone about something is a great stimulus to inquiry. Think of something that is intriguing, that can be seen from a variety of different perspectives, or that is alluded to but not examined in detail in the content or in your teaching of it (referring to your notes from 2.2 and 2.3 above should help!).

**List those aspects of the topic that students can explore exhaustively:**

## **3. Concluding**

***How can one best bring the topic to satisfactory closure? How can the student feel this satisfaction? How can we evoke a sense of wonder about the topic?***

One wants to end a topic in an “heroic” way, which can have two forms. The first form is to re-examine the images we started from and review the content through the lenses of other heroic qualities, including some that might give an opposite or conflicting image to that of our earlier choice. The second form is to show how the romantic association the student has formed can help them understand other topics in a new way. Or one can use both, of course. In concluding we will also

want to reflect back on the topic bringing out why we should feel wonder or awe about it.

**Concluding activities:**

#### **4.Evaluating**

***How can one know that the content has been learned and understood and has engaged and stimulated students' imaginations?***

Any of the traditional forms of evaluation can be used, but in addition, teachers might want to get some measure of how far students' imaginations have been engaged by the topic, how far they have successfully made an imaginative engagement with the material. In addition, the concluding exercises (above) are also evaluative in nature. Students could be asked to identify heroic qualities in stories in other disciplines to examine both their imaginative use of narrative and their understanding of the content. Heroic qualities can also be examined on moral/ethical terms.

**Forms of evaluation to be used:**